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UNVEILINGS OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

BY REV. JOHN CODDARD

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**RIGHT AND WRONG UNVEILINGS
OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD**

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BY
REV. JOHN GODDARD

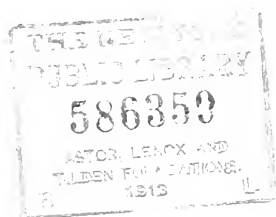


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INTRODUCTORY

The purpose of this little book may be briefly told.

The first chapter, furnishing its title, is primarily intended to remove any existing impression in the reader's mind that Swedenborg's unveilings of the unseen world are in some way related to what is known as Spiritualism, or, more properly speaking, Spiritism. Swedenborg speaks as a Revelator, a man of God, or, in his own words, as "the Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." He comes, not to add to or detract from, the Bible messages of the past, but to open up the deeper meaning of those revelations for a new and rational or manhood age of human development.

Every prophet of God in the past has had a more or less clear vision of realities beyond this world. This is the first great fact of prophecy. Another great fact is that God speaks, not man, nor spirit, nor angel. The third great fact is that God reveals, whenever he speaks, a message for daily and higher life, not chiefly to satisfy curiosity, or overcome scepticism by sensuous proof of another world, or even to comfort us in our affliction; much less to minister to our bodily health, or lead us to greater financial

INTRODUCTORY

prosperity, or for any other earthly or selfish benefit. Swedenborg is always in harmony with these three distinguishing features of God's seers and prophets. To him, as to them, "the word of the Lord came, saying." If he tells more than they about the unseen world, it is because the world needs and can incorporate into spiritual character more and deeper knowledge. And this knowledge, as now revealed, is of such a kind as to harmonize with human freedom—not to overpersuade, nor hypnotize, but to lead to a deeper, truer, more rational, more practical and yet more spiritual life than the world has ever known.

The second, third and fourth chapters, respectively, treat of the spiritual world from the point of view (1) of common or intuitive perception; (2) of Swedenborg's philosophy as illustrated by modern science especially; and (3) of Swedenborg's personal experience, "from things heard and seen."

These chapters, first given in the ordinary course of pastoral duty, are published by request. That they may be of some little service, not only in correcting erroneous impressions, but in helping to establish a rational belief in the wondrous fact that death is only the gateway to endless life, and to help to so build up character here that the future may reveal the Divine presence and His peace, is the hope and prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

PART I

RIGHT AND WRONG UNVEILINGS
OF THE UNSEEN WORLD

RIGHT AND WRONG UNVEILINGS OF THE UNSEEN WORLD

A belief in a life after death is universal. It is found among tribes which have no written revelation, as well as among all others. It may in part be due to a tradition handed down from an ancient revelation, and partly perhaps to what are now known as supernormal experiences. But back of all this there must be something which, for lack of a better term, we may call the "instinct of immortality."

But this instinct is not enough. It often attends the grossest superstitions and immoralities. Divine revelation is needed for its guidance. While revelation cannot rise very far above the conditions of the people who receive it, still it has always contained ideal teachings in advance of their conditions, which have served to preserve their spiritual life until a new revelation, better adapted to those conditions, could be given.

Divine revelation always contains two distinct features. It involves, first of all, *more or less of an opening of the unseen world before the senses of the Revelator*. And, again, it involves

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a message from God to His children, containing new and uplifting laws of right living. Before the eyes of the inspired prophet, Revelator, or man of God, there has been a clear vision of supersensuous realities; the Divine voice has been heard, generally commanding a record to be made of Divine laws, precepts, warnings or encouragements. The unseen world is opened—why? Not chiefly to prove the existence of such a world, but *to show that God is speaking from that world*, and not man, spirit or angel. The chief purpose of the unveiling is not to satisfy curiosity or convince sceptics of another existence, but to reveal God and His laws. *This is what we call the right unveiling*. In this God speaks; His message is uplifting; the supernatural enforces the practical. The effect is to spiritualize the earthly, while in all wrong unveiling the effect is to materialize the heavenly. All through the Bible the spiritual world is unveiled in glimpses, but the unveiling brings a vital lesson. The Divine thunders of Sinai brought to the world the Decalogue, *not as a new but as a Divine law, and also the new thought of "one God over all the earth"*, long lost to the world.

Some think that an outside, sensuous proof of another world would, by itself, uplift humanity. If men could only realize the tremendous fact that there is no death, and that their future would depend on their lives here, how (it is argued) could people do wrong? This is the theory of

spiritualists, and of *some* in the Society for Psychical Research. But what says the gospel in the parable? "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded tho' one rose from the dead." If they are not ready to obey the law, they cannot much profit by a miracle. Such a conviction alone, even if it could be made permanent, would only affect the surface of character. It lacks the true motive. It lacks spirit and life. It lacks the inward power of God. "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." A faith in a future life with God left out lacks the vital element. But faith in that world as a feature, a confirmation, of faith in God and obedience to His laws, is a power for good.

If the restless world of to-day, striving for the things which perish, could have *a true picture* of the future world, could realize how all that is hidden here comes to the light and judgment of Divine truth there; and how it is the presence of the Divine Spirit in the soul which alone banishes that love of self which makes hell and is hell; and that we need to obey the law of God before the Divine love can come in and take possession; if all could see how that inner, religious obedience is building for itself, even here, a real mansion in the heavens, that would help. We need a belief in the other world that is intelligent and rational. We do need a *firmer* belief in a spiritual world; but we need a firmer

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and more rational belief in God and His laws of life to go with it. We need the conviction that it is the Divine voice which said and which says, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his work shall be."

Orderly unveilings of the spiritual world, such as can be made public, are given in connection with and as subsidiary to Divine revelation. The character of those unveilings will depend upon the state and needs of the world at the time. The Lord also sometimes permits disorderly unveilings; for they may prevent a greater disorder.

We are not considering those personal or private glimpses of the other life which occasionally come before death or at other times. These, when unsought, are sometimes right, and in harmony with revelation.

There has never been a great, enduring religious movement without something answering to a spiritual vision. It may not always be an open vision, but it is a consciousness of an unusual presence, an unusual power. But we will consider now only the open visions of the Bible, and these only in a very general way.

It is true that radical critics interpret the visions of the Bible as the oriental, symbolic or poetical imaginings of zealots in a childish and superstitious age. But this theory, when applied to the New Testament (where we find the bold-

est, vividest, most constant and literal assertions of experiences in the unseen world which the Bible contains), becomes especially weak.

The gospel begins with miraculous openings—the angels coming to Joseph and Zacharias and Mary. These accounts, including the vision of the shepherds of Bethlehem, *begin* the gospels; and they end with the miracle of the resurrection and ascension. All of the scenes of the *closing* book of the Bible (Revelation) are laid in the spiritual world. It is impossible to account for the rapid spread of Christianity without the miracle of the resurrection. “We *know*,” says Paul, and the word “know” is the word we should use as witnesses in a court of law when we take an oath that we *know* certain facts. “We have heard, we have seen, our hands have handled,” says John, “the Word of Life.” And that means not only that they had seen Jesus in the flesh, and seen Him dead and buried in the tomb, and seen Him risen, but it means, as his disciple Peter says in his epistle, and as three of the gospels tell it, he, with James and John, beheld Jesus transfigured on the mountain, and with Him Moses and Elijah, dead for centuries.

But for these wonderful unveilings of the unseen world, Christianity might have been buried with Jesus in the tomb of Joseph. Nothing else could have rallied those scattered, disappointed disciples, and made them willing to suffer and die. And the crowning experience of all was

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the historical fact of Jesus' resurrection—His appearance first to one, then to two, then repeatedly to the eleven, and finally to more than five hundred at one time. I do not say that these openings of the spiritual world alone could account for Christianity. They were only the signs of His Divinity, the seals of His teachings, the proofs that God is love. The apostles went forth into the world with the cry, "Christ is arisen." By this supreme fact all the facts of the past story of Jesus' life were explained, were glorified, were spiritualized by the power of the Holy Spirit of Truth. This supreme fact elevated the life of Jesus above the plane of a civil reform, and made Christianity a world religion.

Looking still farther backward for a moment, the same supernatural experiences made Judaism possible as a preparation for Christianity thro' the giving of the Bible, the Word of God, whose literal sense was based upon Jewish history. It was not a spiritual religion. It was not that the Jewish people were better than others that Divine revelation came through them. Moses, the founder, tells us that they did not want it; that they resisted it; that they constantly rebelled against it. Only the Divine power established it, and the exercise of that power required supernatural experiences from beginning to end. And hence, at the Divine dictate, Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan. By the same Divine opening of the unseen world Isaac

was led, and Jacob beheld in vision the ladder to heaven, and Moses saw the burning bush, and Sinai thundered the voice of the living God, and Joshua was confronted by the Captain of the Lord's host on Jordan's farther shore, and the prophets, from Samuel to Malachi, beheld the scenes and heard the voice of the Lord in the unseen world. All this was necessary, not as a substitute for revelation, but *as an accompaniment of revelation*, and especially necessary in those days of spiritual darkness and deadness.

If we had time, it would be interesting to follow this thought into other fields outside of the Bible, and to shew that not only in the establishment of the *grand* dispensations of religion, but in its minor reforms or renewals, there must have come to the leaders, if not an actual vision of the hereafter, if not an actual lifting of the curtain dividing the two worlds, there must have been at least *a new and more vivid consciousness of the presence of spiritual forces*, such as made Luther say, "I cannot do otherwise," such as made Savonarola dare the flames, or called John Wesley away from a dead and formal state church to save and serve the poor, and afterwards led to the reform or Tractarian or Oxford movement within the church itself.

So it must always be in all spiritual development. If not an opening of the eyes, there must be the sense of a Presence, a Power, beyond this

world. It was in the wild, lawless period of Israel's history in the time of the Judges, that it was written, "the Word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision"; and the reform came through Samuel, to whom the Lord openly spoke. Consciousness of the supernatural always attends the living church. Weakness, worldliness or sin follow when that consciousness fails. It is the wise man Solomon who says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Even if the veil is not actually lifted, it may be made transparent or translucent.

But in the case of the need of *great* or *radical revolutions* in religion, it is essential that the actual *lifting* of the veil accompany the revelation of the new and needed truth. Before the one great Jewish foundation teaching of one God could displace the numerous sensual heathen deities, and before the laws of the Decalogue, which had always been substantially recognized as laws of civil order, could be established as the Divine *foundations* of human life, and thus before the way could be prepared for Christianity, God's voice must be heard, the bush must burn, the mountain smoke, the stone tablets be cut out without hands.

And before the Christian teaching could go forth to the world—before the Sermon on the Mount could unfold the deeper sense of the Decalogue, before the disciples could carry to the world the message of the one God of love and

King of an everlasting Kingdom, the unseen world must be seen or felt as a present reality. Miraculous powers must strike off the shackles from prisoners' hands, heal disease, and strengthen the messengers of the Lord in the presence of torture and death.

But, once again, we must recall the fact that these supernatural unveilings were merely accompaniments of a new revelation. They were helps in the establishment of the church as an institution to teach God's truth and to lead men to follow it. And the Christian unveilings were wholly tributary to the new conception of God and of Christian life which Jesus Christ revealed to His followers by His life and teachings.

We reach, then, this conclusion: orderly unveilings of the spiritual world are always accompaniments, supports or confirmations of Divine revelations.

In contrast, there are unveilings of the spiritual world which we believe to be disorderly or wrong. These are such as are sought for as proofs of a hereafter, and whose effect is to weaken the effect of Divine revelation instead of strengthening it; or to substitute the teachings of what are believed to be disembodied spirits in place of Divine revelation.

These wrong unveilings have existed in some form all through the ages, and they exist to-day in various forms, but especially in modern spiritism. They are recognized and condemned all

through the Bible. They were familiar to Moses, the prophets and the apostles. I will refer only to three instances:

Moses, in Deuteronomy (xviii, 9-14) says: "There shall not be found with thee anyone that * * * useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. * * * As for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee thus to do."

And we remember how Saul, in his despair in not receiving any reply from God by Divine means, violated this law of Moses, and consulted the witch of Endor in the night, who called up from the unseen world one who is called Samuel, who truly predicted Saul's death at the hands of the Philistines on the following day.

This substitution of the utterances of spirits for the law of God was very common in the old days. The tendency to it was especially strong in times of trouble. And so, later on, in the troublous days of Isaiah, that prophet, at the mouth of the Lord, was moved to say:

"And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards that chirp and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living, should they seek unto the dead? To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not ac-

according to this word, surely there is no light in them."

Here we have a strong implication that the utterances of these "familiar spirits" are not in accord with the Divine law and testimony, and should never be sought in their place; and we should find, if we looked into the subject, that the utterances of these "familiar spirits" are mostly opposed to the Divine law, and made a substitute for it *to-day*. We should find that, as a rule, they do not acknowledge what we call "Divine revelation." We should find that, as a rule, God as a Divine Personality is not acknowledged, and that the supernatural utterances of the Bible are regarded as spiritualistic manifestations. And we should find that the usual tendency of these things is abnormal, often hypnotic, and sometimes sensual and degrading. Doubtless this latter effect was much more marked in the ancient days. We see then why these practices were so often and so sternly forbidden.

We are living indeed in a very different age, and it would be unjust and unkind to charge spiritists or spiritualists as a class with evil practices; yet, when the foundation of Divine revelation is destroyed, and the utterances of spirits are substituted, there will be a tendency which will be subversive of true freedom, sometimes mild, sometimes extreme. Two cases have come into my own experience, in which the

effect of following the guide of alleged spirits was an actual obsession, so that not only were their minds hypnotized, but their bodies were controlled. They lost their freedom of thought, their power of will, their liberty of action, until, through friends' help, they were enabled to turn to the Lord Jesus. While such extreme cases are doubtless quite rare, yet whenever anyone, having lost his belief in revelation, and hoping to build his faith in a hereafter on sensuous proof, puts himself under these influences, he loses in a measure the Divine protection. He becomes personally known to spirits of a low, earth-bound sort, who, unseen by him, can influence him in ways that he is ignorant of. He puts himself in their power. These things we learn to-day through the experiences of Emanuel Swedenborg, who explains and warns us against them.

But at once the question comes, Was not Swedenborg himself a spiritualist? Did he not claim to deal, for some twenty-eight years, with the people of the other world?

Yes. But now, once more, I must recall our underlying thought that there are right, orderly, Divine openings of the unseen world as well as disorderly ones; that the Divine and orderly ones always come in connection with, and always in subservience to, a Divine revelation. The miraculous appearances of angels and spirits and supernatural forces to Israel all centered around

the Decalogue and the revelation of one God governing all the world. The openings of the spiritual world to the prophets were merely accompaniments of a renewed Divine appeal to the Jews to obey that law of God from Mount Sinai. The angels of the New Testament all came to bear witness of Jesus Christ, the Divine Man; to testify of Him who came, "not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets,"—to reveal their spirit, to change the stern threatenings of Mount Sinai, with its black clouds and lurid lightnings and thunders, into the sunshine and peace of the Mount of the Blessings—to make the light of love disperse the shadows of fear. At the heart of all was the thought of God in Jesus Christ, revealing the true Divine character. A vision of the other world must needs attend it, that men might be helped to realize that His Kingdom is not of this world. It must attend it, that in all the changes and chances, all the trials and troubles of this mortal life, they may keep that promise before them: "let not your heart be troubled; * * * I will come again, and receive you unto myself."

And as it was then, so is it now. If the unveilings of the unseen world at Bethlehem, at Tabor, at Gethsemane, at the resurrection on Calvary, or the ascension on Olivet, had for their purpose that which John, the apostle, describes at the close of his gospel: "*these things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the*

Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through His name," so is it now.

And this is Swedenborg's message. He tells us that Christian doctrine and Christian life had declined through the ages; that gradually its spirit was lost; that the original thought of one God—the Divine foundation which Judaism was established to teach—was lost, so that the thought of the love of Jesus as the supreme power gave place to the thought of a stern Supreme Deity separate from Jesus. The establishment of the doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in God, and of Jesus as a vicarious substitute for the sins of men, and of the church and its head as the Vicar of Christ on earth, and of faith alone or obedience to sacraments as an equivalent for a loving life of obedience to God's commandments of old—all this tended to destroy the real Christian church, and to make another revelation from God necessary to restore and also to unfold more deeply and rationally the teaching of the apostles.

Strange as it may sound, this is Swedenborg's claim, namely, first, to restore the original teachings of Christianity, and, second, to set them upon a new, advanced, and rational basis. He calls himself "the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." He comes wholly in His name. He speaks by His command. He comes, not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them. He comes in the name of the Lord and of His Word of old time, to lead the church back to

the old foundations, but not to lead it backwards to the dark and cruel ages in which it was born, or to stop at its undeveloped conception of Christianity. Swedenborg's teachings are at once thoroughly Christian, conservative and progressive. Jesus, in His glorified form, is God, and so God is one, and God is love and unselfishness itself. The Bible remains, as of old, the Word of God, the church's chart and compass, but while enforcing its practical and literal precepts, it is explained as to its deeper or spiritual meaning, which meaning is adapted not only to the needs of a rational age into which the world is now entering, but to the needs of the deeper, truer Christian life which will develop in the future. All that is revealed is for the sake of this true human life—a life of religion built upon the Divine laws of soul and body; for, according to Swedenborg, "All religion is a thing of life, and the life of religion is to do good."

These things, told in barest outline, are the essential and vital features of the message which Swedenborg, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, brings to the world, and which we, who accept his teachings as a revelation, feel it our duty and our privilege to declare to all the world. It is Christianity, but a Christianity at once spiritualized and rationalized, and adapted to the new age of universal education and developing reason. Without asserting that *all* mysteries are explained, we assert that a grand foundation

has been laid for their explanation, and doubtless the darkness that lingers will be dissipated as we learn to live the life.

I have dwelt upon these vital teachings of Swedenborg with the purpose of bringing them into contrast with what is commonly believed about his teachings. It is commonly believed that his works deal with his supposed experiences in the spiritual world. But what is the fact? The fact is that out of his twenty-nine chief volumes which were published by him in furtherance of his spiritual mission (after he learned of that mission through the opening of his spiritual sight), seventeen volumes are devoted chiefly to the unfolding of the spiritual sense of Scripture, six are treatises on theology, three on spiritual philosophy, one on marriage and its opposites, one on the Earths in the Universe, one on the Last Judgment, and only one limited volume on the spiritual world. And as for publishing the dicta of spirits, he tells us he never wrote anything from their dictation or suggestion, but from the Divine influence, which he could sensibly perceive, and distinguish from all other influences. And, moreover, he explains and in a manner predicts spiritism and warns us against its dangers in the strongest possible way. In all respects, Swedenborg's unveilings of the unseen coincide with the methods of the prophets. This is one of the thoughts that I would leave with you.

And the other and chief thought is that with which we began, namely, that while there exists in all of us what we may call an instinct of immortality, this instinct, apart from and unguided by revelation, is, in the case of savage tribes, changed into superstition and magic, and with those less degraded tends to different forms of spiritism. Whenever, through abnormal conditions of mind or body, the other world, on its lowest side, becomes more or less known to the senses of people through mediumistic agency, the effect upon both mediums and their followers is likely to be injurious to the higher Christian life, and liable to be physically as well as spiritually disastrous. This is Swedenborg's teaching as well as the result of experience and observation.

But this is not the effect of the unveilings which attend revelation. In these the openings of heaven are utilized to serve and strengthen the truths of revelation. The true prophets' visions are visions of God. He calls them to this service, and they are guarded from danger because they are in the way of duty. Being in the way of duty, God's angels, of whom it is said that they shall keep men in all their ways—the ways of duty—they could be kept from harm; and so Swedenborg, as he tells us, was protected. He never sought to be a prophet. He shunned all desire to make for himself a name. He was a humble man, believing deeply in God, originally a scientist, whose aim was to find the human

soul. Like the prophets, his mission came unsought. Like them, the unveiling of the hereafter came unbidden. Gradually his sight was opened, and finally he learned that his mission was to make known to the world the principles of a new and rational Christianity.

And so, wonderful and helpful as are Swedenborg's teachings about the spiritual world (and they are wonderfully helpful), we are taught to think of them only in connection with the spiritual principles of living taught in Divine revelation, or in the Bible, opened and rationalized by Swedenborg. Beautiful and real as is the picture of heaven which he gives us, yet we are led by means of it to remember that, as Jesus said, "the Kingdom of God is within you." All that Swedenborg tells us about the other world reminds us of our duty in this world; calls us back to this world; tells us that it is our duty to shun all evils, not chiefly for the sake of our personal salvation, but to shun them as sins against the Master and His life of love.

In short, there is a similar relation between Swedenborg's doctrines of life (if we call them his) and his teachings about the other world that there is between the law of life given in the Commandments from Mt. Sinai and the thunderings and lightnings and the other prodigies attending their utterance; or the same as between the prophets' message, "Cease to do evil, learn to do well," and the opening of their spirit-

ual eyes to see God in His throne, and hear the cherubim crying, "Holy, holy, holy." Only now the picture of the other world is a rational and practical as well as religious one. It does not appeal to our curiosity, but to our faith. It uplifts, broadens and sanctifies life as never before, destroying superstition, strengthening us for righteous endeavor, bringing the spirit of judgment to bear upon the daily life of deed and motive, making all places holy ground, enabling us to look forward with joy to the life to come, removing as never before the sting of death, by the knowledge that death, to the faithful, is but the passageway to a larger, wiser, nobler life, guided, nourished, led on from glory to glory, from strength to strength by the leadership of the Good Shepherd, the infinite love and supreme wisdom of the Glorified, Jesus Christ our Lord.

PART II

WHY MUST THERE BE A SPIRIT-
UAL WORLD?

WHY MUST THERE BE A SPIRITUAL WORLD?

Why is a Spiritual World necessary to our faith? What is its place and use in the economy of religion? An extreme form of the question would be, why may we not dispense with the idea of another life altogether, and devote ourselves wholly to this life? A very different and more vital form of the question is, what, *in the Heavenly Father's sight*, and in His purpose for His children, is the use and necessity of a spiritual world? And finally, the question will be specific, viz.: how should the thought of the spiritual world, as we are taught to think of it now, affect our lives, our purposes, our characters, to-day?*

Why should we believe in it at all? First, because life would have no sufficient, no worthy meaning without it. How many have asked, in the light of this world and of its experiences alone, "Is life worth living?" And while some, whose lines have fallen to them in pleasant places,

*The question is not to be considered on the broad ground of philosophy, but in the light of common sense, together with some reference to Swedenborg's teachings.

with a goodly heritage of heredity, health and balanced temperament, and opportunity of freedom and leisure, *might* say, "Yes, it is worth while," yet even such, like Solomon, except for the thought that God reigns, might question it when the sun of life's day sinks low in the heavens, when the evil days come, and they say, "I have no pleasure in them," and the windows are darkened, and the doors closed, and one looks forward to the time when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl broken, or the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel at the cistern, and the dust shall return to the earth as it was. Then comes the verdict of the wise man, wise in this world, but not looking beyond this world: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

But on the other hand, with the poet:

"Grow old along with me,

The best is yet to be—

The last of life, for which the first was made.

Our times are in His hand, Who saith, a whole I planned.

Youth shows but half; trust God, see all, nor be afraid."

But looking at the subject from the light of this world, they have far more reason than Solomon (who had every earthly blessing) to question the desirableness of this life to whom it has brought suffering or joyless labor, or enforced sorrow; unless, indeed, they are able to look, consciously or unconsciously, far beyond the three-score years and ten. And even if we have ex-

perienced the Christian's deepest blessing—the inward presence of the Master; even when we can say with the Apostle, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," yet if this world were all, we should presently be compelled, with the same Apostle, to say, "If in this life only we have hope of Christ, we are of all men most miserable." For it would be wholly senseless for the Heavenly Father to put the cup of joy to His children's lips only to withdraw it at once and forever. All persons, or all who have risen above their animal nature, would be miserable without some conscious or half conscious recognition of a better world—who *have* a *hope* if not a faith; but those who have obtained a glimpse of life's highest meaning would be of all men *most* miserable. Life would be meaningless if not worthless; it would seem to be an insult, not only to intelligence, but to all that is sacred, all that is in the highest sense human in man.

But apart from all this, there is such a thing as a *wholly blind recognition* of another world—a testimony to its existence, taking the form of a love of life in this world, common to all human beings, even the criminal classes. When the poor criminal struggles, with the aid of every artifice of falsehood and of feature and of law, to escape conviction, and, when convicted, hopes for a change of sentence of death to that of perpetual imprisonment—this struggle for a life that, if it were all there is, would hardly be worth living,

is an unconscious recognition of a life to come. When a man seeks to rear up for himself a monument, whether as a mausoleum, or a library, or church, or hospital, or university, or a family name or a kingdom—something which shall carry his name down to posterity, it is (Swedenborg tells us) a result of the spirit of the immortal world, flowing into an earth-bound soul, and hence perverted.

The truth is that we are all spirits living in the spiritual world *now*, only the five senses of the spiritual body are so completely veiled over by their connection with the five senses of the material body, that the spiritual world in which we are actually living, and its people, with whom we are most intimately associating, are yet personally unknown to and unrecognized by us. In the poet's phrase, we "move about in worlds unrealized." Yet we are drawing our chief mental forces from that world. Without that companionship we could not think nor act. We are never alone, even in the darkest solitudes of the forest, or the deepest silences of the desert.

But, as said before, the suggestions from the immortal world, the very impressions of immortality which flow in are affected by our own states, and assume an earthly form or coloring. Thus Ponce de Leon was in search of the fabled Fountain of Youth when he discovered Florida. Only a single generation ago the celebrated physiologist, Brown-Séquard, believed he was on the

track of something which would indefinitely prolong life here, when he died. These were blind recognitions of a spiritual world.

Partly because of the old erroneous belief that death was a result of sin, the inflowing spirit of the immortal world has fathered the belief and given birth to the hope of *earthly immortality*. But consider how childish is such a conception! Abolish death, and in a few years our earth would be crowded to suffocation, unless births were abolished also. And that would mean a limit to a Divine Father's infinite and loving purpose. The earth as a schooling for heaven would be no more. Then what would become, or what *has* become of the countless host who have already passed on, if there be no other world? The rule of "first come, first served," would be reversed, and "last come only served," substituted. The past would be meaningless; and there would be no future, save for the few.

And again. How unfit would be this world for immortal life! The eternally expanding needs of the human soul would be "cribbed, cabined, confined," enslaved within the narrow limits of space and time, and one small planet at that. It would be not the promised "large place" of Bible freedom, but a prison.

When the child opens his eyes upon this world it is new and grand and beautiful. But the aged, with failing powers, are apt to echo the psalmist's question, "Who will shew us any good," until,

in faith, they are able to look forward, and finish the verse: "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."

A figure rises before my mental vision out of the memories of the past. It is a very aged man, helpless, almost blind, quite deaf, and with a partly paralyzed throat and tongue. But making a great effort, he finally whispers, "waiting, waiting!" Waiting for what? Waiting in vain? Is that hope, bound up with the deepest, sweetest elements of his being—that which has helped to hold him true to his God and his fellow beings, a vain delusion? Nay, he is waiting to see Him in whom he has believed; Him whom he has tried to follow through the hard lines, the thorny pathway of this life; waiting for that world where he can find youth and strength to serve his brethren again; waiting for the night to give place to the dawn, and for the shadows to flee away; waiting for the fulfilment of the promise, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, what He hath prepared for them that love Him."

Why, then, the spiritual world? Because, on the mere negative side, nothing else will explain human longings, human faith, human hope, human uplooking, *human excellence*. Because without it life would be meaningless. Because this world can never satisfy the soul's needs. Because this world's experiences can never satisfy the sense even of justice. Misty, irrational and

imperfect as the faith in immortality has been, it has held a vital place among the forces which make for progress. If we ask for the reason of early Christianity's power—its power to conquer Rome and to overcome the world; its power to sustain men suffering the most cruel tortures; its power to purify the heart from sin and selfishness, we shall find it in the realization of the love of God, as shown in Christ Jesus their Lord; and we shall find the thought of that love so bound up with the conception of a kingdom not of this world, that the two cannot be separated. With the thought of immortality left out, the love of Jesus would have had small significance. The original symbol of Christianity was not the cross, but the Good Shepherd, with the lamb in his arms. And the power of that picture lay in the thought contained in His words: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.*" His love, I say, was bound up with the thought of eternal life. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer." And again, the converse is true; the true thought of eternal life is bound up with Him. Without Him the spiritual world is soulless. For in His last prayer He said, "*This is life eternal*, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Eternal life in its high sense means not chiefly continuation of existence, but life ruled by His spirit of

love, life of the soul, life in His kingdom in union with Him. But His kingdom cannot reach its perfection in a realm of time and space. His kingdom is not of this world.

And when we realize, as we are taught now, that Jesus Christ glorified is God; that whoever sees Him sees the Father, whose children we all are, sees the Good Shepherd, whose flock we are; when we realize that His love is not only for time, but eternity, then we can understand the necessity of an eternal world. And we can understand the necessity of our planet and of all planets continuing to fulfil their use of laying the foundations of our eternal existence. As Paul said: "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual." When the foundation is laid, then we may go hence into a world free from the restrictions and restraints of the material world and body into a world where, *because He lives, we shall live also.*

Now let us try to understand why death, in the light of the New Church, is the very opposite of what it seems, and why it is a blessing, not a curse. All are familiar with the words of the Saviour spoken in connection with the prediction of His own decease and departure: "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much

fruit." Glorified! How often He prayed to be glorified, to be delivered from the limitations of the earthly nature, to put off the finite, and to put on the Divine! But He must finish His work here, His work of redemption, first. He must overcome the evil powers, and restore mankind to spiritual freedom, so that they may also overcome and go forth to their larger heritage with Him in His own world and kingdom. He described His own deliverance from limitations and His entrance upon the unlimited freedom and glory and power of the Divine life by the figure of the death of the planted grain of wheat springing up into a stalk producing many grains. What He said of the effect of death upon Himself is true in a finite measure of all of us, at least of all who have striven to follow the Master amid the limitations and temptations of this world. Let us then endeavor to understand this truth in the light of the New-Church teachings.

Death frees us from bondage to weak or imperfect physical bodies. How many men of large means are there who would not be willing to give up almost everything for the rugged health of the laborer? Death frees us from bondage to uncongenial surroundings, duties and associations. Necessary as are these surroundings and duties here, vital and Providential as are this world and its experiences, yet our permanent home is not here. Death sets us free to seek our real home. Strive as we may, we cannot, even with unlimited

means, and able to command the services, the labors, the talents, the art, of the whole world, make our surroundings satisfy our real inner needs. It is to be doubted whether there is any deeper discontent than prevails with such as these, unless they are able, consciously or unconsciously, to look beyond this world. There is nothing in a world of mere things that can permanently satisfy. It is impossible to make a permanent home in a world of things, while it is possible, by the right use of things, to see the spiritual life shining dimly through materiality. But we need more than a dim vision of realities. We may be comparatively happy and at peace here, but it is only when something of the spirit of the immortal world shines through. But the soul cries out, even in the best conditions, for a larger freedom. It cries out, with Moses in the desert, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory."

Our life will be larger in the spiritual world if we have lived rightly here. The dying seed will bring forth many grains. *We shall be in freedom as to body.* "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." Like Israel in the wilderness, there will not be one feeble person among the tribes of heaven. As to the body, we shall be freer, because no longer handicapped by illness, age, or infirmity. No fear of the physical results of overdoing. The body will respond to the soul.

We shall be free from the friction of uncon-

genial companions and surroundings. We can command at once by our desire the presence of those we love. The environment, too, when once we have "found ourselves" in that world, will be a help and not a hindrance. No more conflict between earthly and heavenly demands, the "law in the members" warring with the mind.

We shall be free as to mind and heart; there will be opportunities for enlarged knowledge. There will be a wonderfully enlarged and deepened intelligence as well as a vastly increased fund of knowledge. We shall understand the *causes* of things rather than their phenomena. We can command the presence and help of wise instructors, who will also be loving friends. They will come at the spirit's call. They will help to answer the formerly mysterious questions. They will make plain those vital truths of heaven which we have seen here, in Paul's words, only "as through a glass darkly" (that is, by a reflection in the dim, polished, copper mirror). The helpers there will make these things plain, beautiful, vibrant with life. "They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." "They need no candle, neither light of the sun."

Again, it is a peculiarity of that world, that all the things which appear before the senses are in harmony with and helpful relation to the internal states and needs of the soul. This is a truth so new to the world, so different from what we are

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familiar with, that it is not easy to tell it, and less easy to grasp it. If we hear, for example, that the surroundings change with the states of mind, it might seem to destroy all reality, and make objective nature a kind of phantasmagoria. But the truth is, the spiritual world is really as fixed and substantial as we could desire. It is not the fixity of materiality, but because the *permanent states* of mind of its inhabitants are fixed, or, at most, very slow to change. But fixed as is human character as a whole, it has its temporary moods or needs, and these are reflected in the other world by temporary changes in outward nature, and temporary companionships, which serve both for illustration and improvement. The spiritual world may be said to have quite as much fixedness as this world, but its people may be said to move about at will, so to speak, among its various scenes. Or, the homes of heaven are, in general, fixed and unchanging, but the particulars vary with the states and needs of their occupants. The spiritual world is full of truly living pictures. How we labor here to illustrate thoughts so that children can grasp them! In heaven an angel mother, teaching the little child who has gone from the earth, can call upon outward *nature* to reproduce that thought, and it is done. Is it historical characters she would describe? They can be made to appear in living form, until the lesson is learned. Would she teach some profound Bible truth? (For they

have the Bible there in a more living expression.) That truth can be reproduced in beautiful and living heavenly symbols in a manner that will be understood by and be delightful to the childish mind and heart, as well as to the mature understanding.

And so, with adults as well as children, every facility is furnished to guide the soul onward into deeper realms of truth, into deeper, sweeter and broader states of love for God and man, and into larger capacities for usefulness.

As to the question of usefulness, that is, of heavenly occupations, here, too, our life will be larger, for we shall be at home. It is but little that we know, or are capable of knowing, about heavenly occupations. I have alluded to the care of children or young people, who have been taken. If parents knew what is being done for them on the other side, their hearts would have deep cause for rejoicing, although their natural feelings would still remain. We remember what the Bible says of the angels having charge over us here, both adults and children. If we could realize what is being done for us *all through our life here* by unseen guardians, whom the Lord calls to this service, we should all rejoice. Can we better show our gratitude than by daily co-operation with them, and when the helpful, kindly thought comes, or the flash of inspiration to do, not our own, but the loving Father's will, may we not thank the Father that He has sent His

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angels, and be grateful that we have been worthy of such association, even for a little while?

We might pursue the subject of the enlargement of useful opportunity, the deepening of character, the opening up of the soul to higher and higher realms of truth, afforded by the spiritual world. With time we might make it clearer why that world is necessary, not only to explain the meaning of the life here, but necessary to explain why the deep longings of the human heart cannot be satisfied here, and to show how, in that domain of living substance, all human powers are set free. All will have room for exercise, room for service to fellow-men—room for intellect and will, for heart and hands; room to grow in understanding, love and power; room to learn truth without error and without obscurity; room for the soul to expand and receive more and more of the Father's willing gifts; opportunity to approach nearer and nearer to Him who loves us, and who made us to be images and likenesses of Himself. And so death is no more a grinning monster, but a beautiful angel, bidding the spirit to go forth to its birthright of heavenly wealth of wisdom, love and usefulness; bidding the one grain of earthly capacity to die, that it may bring forth 30, 60 or 100 grains.

I have tried to answer, why is the spiritual world necessary? Why is faith in it vital to men? And now, in conclusion, *let me apply that to our own special thought of the spiritual world,*

which we believe to be revealed from heaven, with this single question in mind: "What is the legitimate effect of this special teaching upon life and character? Or, what use does it serve?"

It serves two great purposes.

1. It presents a clear and attractive picture of the future home. Taught wisely in early childhood, let me assure you that it remains a beautiful vision of reality to look forward to. It banishes the old, irrational, misty thought of a bodily resurrection; it gives us a rational thought in its place; it has power to remove the old fear of death; and while it cannot destroy our natural affection, so that we can no longer mourn for those we love, who have gone in advance of us, it does help greatly to modify our grief, and bring our loved ones nearer.

Let me illustrate one of these statements respecting the effect of this teaching. A promising young man, indirectly connected with the church of my former pastorate at Cincinnati, won the affections of a young and very beautiful girl in a distant city, who had been brought up in the light of our faith. The union was brief. She was taken ill, and grew worse. When her husband, who was most tenderly attached to her, was expressing to her his own grief and his sympathy for her in the almost certain prospect of death, she replied cheerfully, "Oh, death is nothing; it is merely like passing from this room into the next." In this state she fell asleep. This faith

removes the fear of death. I might say more and add, without hesitation, that it often makes the thought of going hence positively attractive, as one would love to go to a country beautiful in climate, soil, scenery, and where love and justice reign supreme, and the love of Jesus Christ rules over all.

2. The other thought is this :

Our vision of the other world, or, at any rate, the vision of heaven, while in one aspect very beautiful, is in another aspect quite forbidding. For it is not merely a beautiful, sentimental picture of a lovely home. It tells of the beauty of the soul and life. The beauty of heaven, the peace and joy of heaven, are possible only to the unselfish, the pure in heart, the just and true in word and act, the transparent in character. And not only in the sight of men, but in the sight of Him who reads the heart. True in motive and purpose, as well as word and deed, must they be who would attain the heavenly state. Moreover, our teaching is, that it is on earth that we must begin that life. Here must the foundations be laid. And while the blind in the world or the ignorant and incapable are not to be judged as are the intelligent, they who have the light are responsible according to their light. And so the light or truth of heaven is a judgment. The picture of heaven which we behold, so far from leading us away from life's duties, or bidding us dwell in sentiment, almost sternly bids us return

to this world and be faithful to our duties and to God's commandments if we ever expect to attain heaven. It holds up the ten commandments of Mount Sinai as the holy law of God, written with his own finger, and obedience to them as the basis of heavenly life. It also opens up the deeper meanings of those commandments, until they are seen to be laws searching the heart to its innermost depths. It tells of the vital importance of each period of life, the sacredness of every day and hour, as the seasons and opportunities for preparation for an unending existence. It tells of the obligation resting upon us, to use all our talent, all our possessions, as a trust placed in our hands by the Lord, to be employed in His service, that is, in the service of our fellow men.

Why, then, the spiritual world? Why does the human race, in all ages, lands and faiths, believe in it? Because there is a universal human demand for such a faith—a demand of the heart, of the intellect, and a demand growing out of life's experience. The belief in it is necessary, on man's part, to satisfy his faith in the Divine justice, and in the Divine love. The spiritual world is necessary, *on the Lord's part*, to satisfy His love for us as His children—that love which can only be satisfied by giving them the gift of eternal life.

Because, once more, it is absolutely essential to human development. We have powers which cannot be developed in the restrictions of material

space and time. We ask questions which cannot be fully answered here. We are capable of a usefulness and happiness impossible here. Death is essential as a stepping stone to that more abundant life which the Saviour has promised us. It was expedient that He go away from His disciples in body that He might come closer to them in spirit. Where He was, there He promised that we should be also. He can fulfil that promise fully only in His own and the soul's own world.

And finally, the revelation of that world which has been given for our use today is necessary, we believe, to establish our faith in immortality upon the rational basis befitting a manhood age of the church, to deliver our faith from its childish superstitions, and to furnish us with substantial reasons for right living here and now, and to supply nutriment for that inner and higher motive life which prevails in heaven.

PART III

WHERE IS THE SPIRITUAL WORLD?

WHERE IS THE SPIRITUAL WORLD?

At the eastern end of Lake Geneva, in Switzerland, high up among the hills, overlooking the noble scenery of that region, is an attractive resting place for tourists. Across the lake to the south mountains a mile and a half high rise abruptly from the shore. Farther away, to the left, loftier peaks, covered with eternal snow, are visible. From a still higher point back in the hills Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn appear on the dim horizon.

But this view requires a clear atmosphere. On the average summer morning even the mountain across the lake is covered with clouds. As one watches for the near mountain outline, when the mists are rising at the bidding of the strengthening sun, one first sees it as the outline of the cloud, the sole difference being the *permanence* of the mountain lines, while the cloud lines change. But by and by, the form becomes clearer, and at last the whole magnificent prospect is revealed.

Observing this phenomenon recently, this thought came:

With most people, spiritual subjects, or, as the

Bible calls them, "lofty" subjects, including the thought of a spiritual world, are misty, mysterious, sometimes even painful; spiritual things mingle with clouds of fancy or with superstitions. It does not destroy the faith of the true hearted but obscures it. But where the pride of intellect prevails, spiritual things are, for this reason, apt to seem like *all cloud and no mountain*. Some do not hesitate to attribute the faith in the hereafter to dreams, or abnormal bodily conditions.

But other thinkers say that the fact of the universal permanency of faith in a life after death among all nations, notwithstanding its cloudiness, is one of the strongest evidences of its truth.

Will the mists ever arise? Hear what the prophet says:

"He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces." Hear also our Lord's words: "The son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Again: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and there shall be no more death."

Instead of the belief of the past—i. e., a belief in the second advent of the Saviour in the literal clouds of the sky—think of an advent of His Spirit of love and truth, making the clouds which cover the Bible's surface bright with new

meaning, and dispersing the clouds of the mind, which mingle faith with superstition, if not with fear or dread.

Our Lord also said, "I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth, and will show you things to come."

This church stands for the belief that these promises have been or are being fulfilled; that light has been given on all great spiritual subjects, including the thought of the life after death. And what is said here will be based upon what has been in this way revealed.

I would like at once to come to that aspect of our subject which would be a comfort to those who are mourning the loss of loved ones. This I shall hope to do a little later. But now I shall speak more to the mind than to the heart, and more to the scientific than the higher mind, for our thought is merely preparatory. I shall speak to those who are asking the question, "Where is the spiritual world?" whether the question implies a doubt of the existence of any such world, or whether it be an earnest, rational inquiry, devoid of prejudice or doubt.

It is a question to which all believers, savage or civilized, have made some reply. With the Greeks and Romans, feeble in spirituality, the world of spirits was underground; with the tribes of northeastern Siberia it was under the

ocean; with the North American Indians it was on the earth's surface, far away. All would point and say, "Lo, it is there."

But with a large part of the race, including Christians, it has been thought to be somewhere *above*, in suns or planets or stars, or beyond. With the old Druids the Milky Way was regarded as a procession of human souls on their journey to a far off home. Christians' thought has been *almost* as cloudy and fanciful. Talking about a *spiritual* world, they have longed for something solid, fixed, *material*, and so they have even taken up with the old heathen conception of the resurrection of the material body in a rejuvenated material world, and the thought has vibrated between this and the dream of planets or stars as the future home. And why? Because they wanted to associate their loved ones gone with the thought of reality, solidity, and they are willing to make use of superstitions and myths in order to preserve this idea of reality, and so, too, they visit the graves of their beloved. But faith persists in spite of the mists. The outline of the mountain remains permanent, unlike the clouds.

Let us first ask the Bible our question—not, indeed, those parts which are expressing *opinions*, but those in which the spiritual world actually comes to view.

Recall the passage in II Kings (VI, 17), in which Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes might

be opened, and they were opened. They were not the eyes of his earthly body, which had previously seen the horses and chariots of the Syrians in the plain, but the eyes of a different body, which could see the horses and chariots of fire on the mountain.

The shepherds of Bethlehem saw the glory in the night time and heard the angels' song. Nobody else saw or heard them, as far as we are informed. They must have had other eyes and ears opened, which commonly are closed.

Up to a high mountain apart Jesus led Peter, James and John, where they saw their Master in His glorious body, and with Him Moses and Elijah, who had been dead, as we call it, the one for eight, the other for fifteen centuries. Then suddenly the eyes that saw these things were closed, and Jesus was seen alone, and His shining garments gave place to the travel-stained Syrian raiment.

In all these instances and many more recorded in the Bible the eyes and ears and sometimes other senses of the spiritual body, unless the Bible tells of fancy and not fact, were opened into the spiritual world. Where was that world? If you had asked Elisha's servant, he would have said, "Why, it is *here*." So would the shepherds. If we must answer in the terms of space and time, so must *we* say it is not in sky or suns or planets, not far away, but *here*—close at hand. Put away this misty dream of travelling through space, in

the company of planets, suns and comets. A veil falls from the inner eyes, and we are there. Sometime that veil will fall from the eyes of all, and death will be death no more.

And now let us try to answer the question in the light of the New-Church philosophy, approaching it from the earthly side. Here is the solid earth, with its rock basis, which to our senses is the most real of all things. Divided up into farms or town lots, we call it *real estate*. In one sense—the lowest sense—it is real (not imaginary, as the idealist thinks), but in another sense it is the least real of all things, because the deadest of all things, or the least alive. Let us understand how, and thus where, we are to look for genuine realty or reality.

Surrounding the earth and extending above it for perhaps a hundred miles is the air we breathe, and which is the medium of sound to the ear. Within the air, and penetrating it in every direction, scientists have discovered another atmosphere of a much more vital kind, which is the medium of both light and electricity, which they call ether. And now they suspect that there is still another vastly more refined atmosphere, which is the medium of gravitation, that very mysterious force which has baffled thought for ages.

Now observe, if you please, how the vitality, that is, the life, and in this sense the *reality*, increases as we pass from the gross to the refined,

or as we approach the spiritual. The motion of the waves of the sea may be at the rate of ten or fifteen miles an hour. The motion of the waves in the air, which conveys sound, is about 1,200 feet in a second. The motion of the waves in the ether, which conveys light and also electricity, is about 180,000 miles in a second. The motion of the waves in that more subtle medium which conveys the force of gravitation appears to take no time at all. For while it requires eight minutes for light to come to us from the sun, or at the rate of twelve million miles a minute, this motion is like the crawling of a snail compared with that of the gravitation force, which operates instantly between star and star.

That is to say, the deeper we penetrate into the mysteries of nature, the nearer we come to nature's *swiftest* forces. And another fact is that in these deeply concealed, invisible atmospheres are the *most vital*, most powerful forces. Take away the motion of the ether, and all light and heat would fail. Remove gravitation, and not only would rivers no longer flow, and the tides of the ocean fail, but planets and suns would cease to revolve. All life would perish.

We have seen how nature is made up of layers or degrees, one within another, the deepest or most hidden being the most vital and real. But now, instead of nature as a whole, let us think of man.

It has been said by another that, if we separate the bony system from the rest of the body, it is recognizable as human, although as a skeleton it is crude and repellent. Here we have one degree of the body, the lowest, most earthly part, separate from the others. Again, if we should separate the circulatory system of heart and branching arteries and veins in all their numberless ramifications even to the smallest capillaries, and could hold it up before us, we should see a much more perfect human form. Here is another separate degree. Once more, if we could separate the brain with its branching nerves from all the rest, we should behold a still more perfect human form, very distinct in its degree from all the rest, and superior to all the rest.

Now the brain, with its nervous system, is more interior, more secret, and hence more difficult to understand, than all the rest. Only in these last days have physiologists begun to comprehend it. Its workings can never be seen, as can those of the bones or circulatory system. It can only be known by experiments with living creatures, or else through accidents or injuries to its several parts. The life of the body is in the brain. Injure one small part of the brain, and the eye cannot see; another, and the ear cannot hear; another, and the tongue cannot speak words; another, and the mind cannot grasp words, although it can understand as well as ever; another, and the power of *movement* is

destroyed. The brain rules every part of the body. It is the body in a higher form.

But the brain itself is, on its part, only a servant to the mind, which is distinct from it, and wholly out of sight. Here, then, is the real man—the being who thinks, and loves, and chooses; the being who has power to live to the flesh, or to the spirit. It is not the eye that sees, but the brain; nor yet the brain, but the mind. The eye is but a superior opera glass, fitted to the eye of the brain, and the brain a far superior opera glass, fitted to the eye of the mind. You observe that the mind is so far *above*, or so far *within*, or so far *distant from* the lower stratum of this world that it takes several opera glasses to bring earth near enough to be seen!

And yet, with all this great chasm between mind (or spirit) and matter, how easy it is, by means of these opera glasses, to bring the mind down to earth! And here is the sad part of it, that the mind cannot only *look* down to earth, but in its freedom it may actually *descend* to earth and make its home there; and, like the accursed serpent in Eden, crawl with its whole length in the dust. And this, by the way, is involved in that Bible story of Eden and the fall.

Departing from our immediate thought for one moment, let us inquire what happened to Elisha's servant when he saw the horses and chariots of fire, and the shepherds of Bethlehem, or to the disciples at the transfiguration? Simply

this: the opera glass of the brain became detached for a moment from the mind above it, so that the mind became free to use some of the senses of its spiritual body.

For this fact that the mind sees, and hears, and tastes, and touches, and not the eye, or ear, or tongue, or hands, means that the mind is in the human form, having its own organized body, with all its parts, only made of a different material, or substance. The invisible mind is the life, the power, the man. Indeed, it is the power which has given to the body of this world its form and personal peculiarities. As the old English poet Spenser, with the true poet's insight, says:

"For of the soul the body form doth take;
The soul is form and doth the body make."

And now one step higher. As the body is made up of layers, bones, muscles, heart and its ramifications, brain and its nerves, so the mind itself has its higher and lower degrees, and while the angel man lives in one of the higher degrees, the selfish or earth-bound spirit or man lives in the lower. And we can think of each plane or degree having its own body answering to the state of the mind. Hence, the angel is beautiful, and the earthly spirit is unbeautiful, or deformed. But besides the spiritual body, there is something which every one who dies takes with him from this world, composed of the most interior

substances of the natural world, and it is this which retains the memory of the world, and will enable us to recognize our friends when we go hence. But this is a subject as yet imperfectly understood. It is for the future.

We look up into the sky at night, and with our present knowledge of the stars we realize a little the immensities of space. But far more wonderful is what we are told about the inside meaning of all this marvellous foundation or preparation for life which we behold in this grand universe. Most of our stars are suns, around which no doubt revolve countless planets filled with people who will soon pass over to the other side, the life side, of their worlds. We can think of every planet having its own spiritual world around it, all the more real because it is at present hidden from the eyes of the earthly body.

The reason underlying all this is very simple. It is this: as we leave the surface and approach the centre of life; or as we leave the visible and draw near what is now the invisible, we find substances and forces growing more living and powerful. All nature's index fingers in science, as well as in all the religious intuitions of the ages, are pointing inward, not outward, not to the sky above, but to the soul within, and within and above the individual soul to God, who is a spirit, the One Life, the inmost and only Life in all.

The poor woman of Samaria asked the Savior whether the dwelling place of God was in Mt.

Gerizim, as the Samaritan Jews thought, or in Mount Zion, as the Judæan Jews believed. Shall we say, "Lo here! or lo, there!" The Greeks, too, if asked for the dwelling place of Jupiter, the supreme deity, would point to Mt. Olympus, and say, "Lo, there." But Jesus said, "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit." And in a similar sense, tho' less profound, do we affirm that the spiritual universe is within the material, as the soul is in the body.

Why, then, have so many located heaven in the skies? A complete answer would require time. We shall have to acknowledge that the Bible often seems to locate God's dwelling place on high; and from time immemorial have worshippers built their altars on high places. In brief, this is the answer. Elevation in space is the natural symbol of what is interior, pure, refined or holy in the state of the heart and mind. We speak even now of "high thinking," or "lofty thought," meaning deep thought, or pure, true thought—thought which strives to attain a heavenly standard. And so we think of heaven as above. And so the Bible, the Word of God, speaks in the language of symbolism, when it speaks of Him as "the High and Lofty One, who inhabits eternity, and whose name is holy." And, therefore (to continue the quotation), it says that He "dwells in the high and holy place, with him

who is of a contrite and humble spirit." The state of humility, then, is a high place. And so the Savior, when asked how He could manifest Himself to the disciples, said that the Spirit of Truth would dwell in them. In a few passages of this kind, including the one already alluded to, in which He said, "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, but is within you," we read the real truth—not only the truth as it applies to the development of spiritual character, but as it applies to the location of the spiritual world itself. The past has been, in a religious sense, an age of what we may call spiritual childhood or immaturity, which required that the truth should be taught, as our Lord for the most part taught, in parables or *symbols*, for they could not bear any more then. But the age is approaching, yea, is close at hand, when we shall be taught as full grown men, when we shall be shown "plainly of the Father," and plainly and reasonably, too, of His kingdom and the way thither. The time is coming when mankind will put away childish things in religion, cease to depend upon blind authority, cease to be ruled by mysterious fears and superstitions; and this will be when the spirit of Him who called Himself "the Light of the World," and who is the Spirit of Truth as well, shall become the Supreme object of our worship, God over all, blessed for evermore. With Him as our Guide, there will be no darkness at all. Truth will take the place of error;

sunshine will disperse the clouds and darkness; the mountain will stand out bright and clear; we shall lift up our eyes to it, for our help; and "the mountain of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills."

My friends, we need to realize the stupendous and sublime reality of a grand spiritual universe within this, a spiritual world within the natural world, as the soul is within the body; within, not spacially, but statically, and that in the very inmost of all, as the supreme life of all, the love and the leadership of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

PART IV

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL WORLD?

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL WORLD?

In considering the question, "Where is the Spiritual World?" we saw the index fingers of nature pointing inward as the source of life. We saw the Bible picturing the nearness of the spiritual world to this. We saw in the New-Church philosophy how creation consists of distinct but closely connected layers, degrees, or planes, each having its own free or independent existence, one degree being within another, not in the sense of space, but in quality of life, each inner degree being the cause of the one outside of it, and hence being more vital, possessing all that the outer possesses, only in a nobler form. We saw the inner degrees growing more living in their ascent, until they reach the inmost, the one only real Life in Itself, that is, God, the Divine Man, or Divine Love and Wisdom. The logic compels belief in a spiritual world, as real in all respects as this world, but not the same as this, either in substance or in its quality of activity.

We found in the clouded sayings of the literal Bible this clear truth: "Neither shall they say, lo here or lo there; for the kingdom of God

is within you." And we saw that wherever in the Bible the two worlds appeared to mingle, it was not because earthly eyes can see the spiritual, but because the inner senses of the spiritual body were opened. One world does not shade off into the other. The spiritual is not the ghost of the natural. But the spiritual appears when the spiritual eye is separated from the natural eye of the brain and body, as one might withdraw his eye from the telescope to behold with the eye alone the objects close at hand. For it is a fact that we are spirits, living in spiritual association now. That world is nearer than this is to us, altho' we are unconscious of it.

Our question now is, "What is the Spiritual World?" Not, what is the nature of the substances which compose the spiritual bodies of the inhabitants, and the real scenery of the spiritual world—the earth, the sky, the sea, the hills and mountains and plains and homes which that world must contain, if it be a livable world to us. This is not our question now, but rather, how does that world appear to those who enter it? What is the experience of death, and what follows death? What are its occupations? Time will permit only of a brief treatment.

The basis of our reply must be the experience of Swedenborg, who for 28 years passed as freely from one world to the other as we go in and out of our houses, and who studied that world with the same thoroughness and devotion

which he had shown in his previous 40 years' study of the deepest problems of nature.

But why take Swedenborg's word? In brief reply, let me turn aside for a moment. In the month of March, 1908, Swedenborg's remains were removed from their obscure resting place in London to an expensive mausoleum in the Cathedral of his university city of Upsala, in Sweden, under the auspices of the English and Swedish governments, carried on a Swedish warship and escorted, on sea and land, by military, naval, civil and college dignitaries. And why? Because of his most remarkable achievements in scientific discovery, eclipsed at the time by prejudice excited by his subsequent career, and only now beginning to be recognized by the most advanced students. Most scientific works are said to be almost useless after ten years, but his works, after 175 years, are only beginning to reveal their prophetic quality. We trust him, then, first, because he has shown himself most worthy of trust, especially because of his intense love of truth and his great humility, and his entire purity of life. But how about his later works? Well, we trust those to the extent that they appeal both to our reason and to the deepest intuitions of our souls; or for the reason given for the belief in the Gospel: "Whereas I was blind, now I see." Not because he incidentally *proved* his power to communicate with the dead, altho' he did, even to the satisfaction

of such a man as Emmanuel Kant, the sceptical philosopher. Swedenborg himself never made use of such means to convince any one, for he well knew that such conviction was of little or no value in itself. It is not wrong, however, to *confirm* our faith by this undoubted fact.*

The very word "death" has had, and with many still continues to have, a repellent, if not a fearful, sound. Death has been called "the king of terrors," and has been pictured as a ghastly, pitiless monster. Entering silently and unexpectedly into our homes, it has borne away into a dark unknown those whose lives are bound up with ours. Its approach has been attended generally with pain or discomfort, nearly always with growing infirmity, by a shrinking of the frame, a pallor of the face, and sometimes at the last by a laboring of the breath and spasmodic movements painful to witness, which, in the ignorance and superstition of the past, have suggested untold sufferings. And a personal fear of death, like a black cloud, has overshadowed many people *all through life*, casting a gloom over everything.

But not only death, but *what follows* death, has been to some a gloomy, if not a dismal or distressing, thought. Personal expressions have

* Whenever there was some important use to be subserved, Swedenborg did not refuse to bring back word from the other world, as in the well-known case of the "lost receipt." But he always refused to do it to satisfy curiosity about the future.

been heard like these: "The spiritual world will be wholly strange, and its people will be strangers. I must leave home behind, and all those familiar faces and surroundings, activities and enjoyments which have made life happy and desirable. The spiritual world must be, to those who enter it, a foreign country." And besides this, the old superstitions of the past, the clouded symbols of the literal sense of the Gospel, come to mind, which have left the impression that the love of God, even the love of Jesus Christ, has its limit at the grave, and that one is liable to hear the stern voice of condemnation, bidding him to depart, against his will, into the realm of darkness, if not into eternal suffering, or even torture.

We cannot now attempt to answer all these questionings and fears, although it would be an easy and delightful task. But, first of all, let us bring before our minds that supreme truth with which Swedenborg, in the work entitled "Heaven and Hell," begins his description of the spiritual world. In its very first chapter, as the central, ruling thought, is the statement that "the Lord (Jesus Christ) is the God of heaven." Here is the most vital truth of the New-Church revelation; the Lord Jesus Christ, in His glorified nature, reigns, the God of heaven and of all below heaven. "All power," He said, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth." If we can accept this thought, all our

fears of evil which can come to us from the outside, that is, evil which we ourselves have not invited by our own wrong courses, will be removed. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Heavenly Father; "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," He assured His disciples. And this means *not only* that His Fatherly love and His perfect wisdom are guiding the human race *as a whole*, but it means that He is with every child of His in all the details of life, from infancy to old age, and forever. But that love is especially near in the season of death. You well know the words of the 23d psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. * * * Yea, tho' I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." You know the echo of these words in the New Testament: "I am the good shepherd and know my sheep." We understand that the eastern shepherd knows all his sheep by name, each one separate from all the rest, and provides for each one separately. So does the Good Shepherd. If we could accept and trust this supreme truth, we should fear no evil coming to us from the outside, neither in life, nor in death, nor in the world to come.

Here is another great truth of the New Testament which we must not forget, namely, that whenever and wherever the Lord Jesus Christ comes, He comes surrounded with angels. "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His

Father with His angels." You recall that at His birth the angels came to the shepherds. At the close of His temptations in the wilderness "angels came and ministered unto Him." At His resurrection the angels were at the sepulchre, saying, "He is not here, but is risen." The thought here is that His spirit makes use of human instrumentalities to guide and lead, and care for His children at all times, but in a peculiar and special way, or rather in an open and manifest way, at certain great and vital seasons, when there is need of it, and therefore at the hour of death. And so, when we talk of angels, we mean the Spirit of the Lord, in His infinite love and wisdom, exhibited especially by means of angels. And again, when we talk of angels, we do not mean a superior race of beings, but we mean men and women and children gone hence from the planets, who have become angels, and whose joy it is to do their Father's work. For there are no other angels—nothing above man.

There are those who are especially fitted to attend upon the dying, and to minister to their needs on their first awaking. I have mentioned the fear of death all through life. Dr. Weir Mitchell tells us that in all his experience he never knew a single instance of a person fearing death when it actually approached, even when all through life it had been a matter of dread. If we are not ready to say that this is the effect

of supernatural presences, we certainly may see in it a merciful provision from some source. Is it not the most helpful explanation to recall the promise: "Yea, tho' I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me"? The apparent suffering in death is not real; it is of the body only; the mind is unconscious of it.

Whether one has lived well or ill, angels from the highest realms are with him during the sleep of death, and during the first part of the awakening. If it be true that the angels are with us in the sleep of the night, and if we can feel the results of their presence when the morning comes, in mental clearness of vision and peace of soul, it is more true in the deeper sleep of death—a sleep not extending beyond the time of our Lord's sojourn in the sepulchre, or beyond the third day. During the state of unconsciousness and the beginning of the awakening these ministers of the Lord surround the dying one with what we may call an atmosphere of life and love and peace—a sense of being tenderly cared for. No evil influences, no anxious states, are permitted to approach. No thought of death is present, but only of life, life more abundant, life eternal, life blessed and happy. As the highest angels are attendant upon the babe at its birth and in its period of helplessness, so at the birth into the other world the holiest influences draw near.

And so there is no shock. Just as the sleep of the night obscures the vividness of the scenes of the day before, so the profounder sleep of death helps to lift one above the familiar scenes, duties and cares of this world and removes still farther away the sense of strangeness or of loss. There is also imparted at this time, or rather developed, the capacity to think in a higher, deeper way than before, apart from ideas of space and time, and so to express one's self in the language of the spiritual world, which is common to all, and understood without learning.

And so, after all this preparation, one gradually awakens. First comes a dim consciousness, then more complete, and then sight, hearing, touch, and all the other senses, and one finds himself in a body and world as complete in all respects as the body and world here. All is substantial and real—more real than ever, because the senses of the spiritual body are so much more perfect. So natural is it all that one does not realize, until he is told, that he has changed worlds. He is clothed with a body as real as the body he had here. He is in a familiar room and house. Outside are familiar scenes; and attendant upon him are most kind and loving friends, thoroughly human, who are responsive to his every wish. At first these companions are the highest and best of the angels, who remain until they perceive that their presence is no

longer congenial or useful, and then they yield to others better adapted to his returning earthly states (out of which he had been temporarily lifted by the beautiful and sacred experience of death), until at last he is surrounded by those who are thoroughly congenial to his ordinary state of mind, and then, for a time, he lives a life not very dissimilar in appearance to that which he lived in the world. His memory of the world is still quite active. He thinks of his friends, and his thought may bring their inward presence, but he cannot see them, or hear them, or touch them, because the substances of the higher world, real as they are, do not shade off into the substances of this, but are wholly distinct in kind, the one never interfering with the other.

If you ask, How can there be a solid and substantial world without material substance? this is a question which belongs rather to the "why" than to the "what." I will turn aside, however, for a moment, to say, or repeat, that everything material originated in a spiritual or ideal form in the spiritual world, and, first of all, in God, who made it, and who is a spirit. As Mrs. Browning tells it:

"There's not a flower that blooms upon the earth
But hath a flower upon the spiritual side,
Substantial, archetypal, all aglow
With blossoming *causes*."

If you can think, not only of flowers, but earths and suns and everything else as first existing on the spiritual side, and then of the vital nature of the substance of the spiritual world, capable of being moulded or shaped by the spirit, as Mrs. Eddy imagines the fixed and comparatively dead substance of this world can be, then you have one clew to the problem. Mrs. Eddy's idea in this respect is true there, but only partially true here. And if you will remember that, when the spiritual body sees and touches spiritual substance, the effect is the same as when the material body sees and touches material substance, you have an important clew. Then if you can grasp the law of correspondence, which connects a higher degree with a lower, and which shows how things were first thoughts, and how, through this law of correspondence, things may be Divine symbols of thought, and realize how angels, in dealing with things, are dealing with thoughts, you have another clew to what life may be hereafter. And once again, let me repeat, let us realize the absolute necessity to human life there as much as here is the fact of an outside or objective world—a world of objects and sounds and contacts. And when it is asked, "How can such a world be *spiritual*, or a world of *spirit*? Is it not the material world over again?" the reply is that the substance of the spiritual world is not inert like ours, resistant to the desires of the mind, but is a servant to the mind or spirit, is

shaped by the mind, is immediately expressive of its affections, its ideas, both literally and symbolically. The *things* (as we call them) of the spiritual world are not *mere* things (altho' low down spirits may regard them as mere things), but they are thoughts in substantial form, and in heaven they are expressions of heavenly thoughts according to the law of heavenly symbolism. And so in heaven every apparent dealing with things is an act of the spirit, or a spiritual act. Every use is a use for the soul, and not, as here for the most part, a use for the body. But let us return to our main subject for our final thought.

The spiritual world, according to Swedenborg, has three great divisions—heaven, or the abode of those who are led by the Lord; hell, the home of those who are led by self-love; and the intermediate world, called “the world of spirits,” which is a state of preparation for the permanent home.

The intermediate state has two divisions. The one is occupied by those who, in Swedenborg's language, are in “the state of the exteriors,” which means the outside or earthly state of mind, into which everyone relapses after the temporary uplift caused by the near presence of the angels of the resurrection. While the process of death dulls the most vivid earthly sensibility, still the memory of the world and its people and things and activities remains, and for this reason the

visible spiritual world does not appear essentially different from this world, altho' it is *really* essentially different, being a direct expression of the state of mind.

We are all well aware that in this world we do not always reveal our real selves, not even to friends. The material body, through its very fixity, may be made a veil, behind which one may hide his real interior purposes. The inner life may be very different from the outer. Those whom we call evil may not be so from deep choice; it may be largely the result of outward conditions. Those we call good may be so for selfish and worldly reasons. It is absolutely impossible in this world to know the real inward quality of any human life, altho' we can see the indications. We cannot judge finally of any one, while we *can* say that, if such a one be what he appears, he is good or bad, as the case may be.

But while it is not difficult to conceal one's inner life here, the whole tendency of the spiritual world is to bring it to the surface. While one may still hide in a measure his secret thoughts, it becomes increasingly difficult. The whole influence of that world, while careful not to destroy the real freedom of any, is to fulfil that law spoken by the Savior: "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard

in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear, in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." And I will add here the Lord's words which follow these, altho' not belonging to our immediate thought: "I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do."

This process, by which the interiors are brought to the surface, is what is meant by the judgment. It is the *opening of the books* mentioned in Revelation XX. It is a process by which the interiorly good at heart are led to reject the disorder and wrong which lie on the surface of their nature, and by which the interiorly selfish and evil put off what seems good in their lives, but which is only a covering or veil of evil. It is a process of separation, often involving more or less of suffering. It is the truth of the intermediate world and the judgment which is effected there which is preserved and likewise so terribly materialized and distorted in the Romanist doctrine of purgatory. This distortion and abuse inspired the Protestants with such horror that they rejected the whole doctrine of the intermediate world as an invention, whereas it is a vital teaching.

The judgment is simply a process of bringing the real life to the surface. And the real life, the ruling life, is always the inner life. With the well-disposed, it is a relief from the bondage

of inside heredities and outside environments. One comes into harmony with himself. The words of Job are fulfilled: "The wicked cease from troubling; the weary are at rest." It prepares one to find his real home, his place and use and joy. Swedenborg tells us that after one who is well disposed has passed through this second state in the intermediate world (the "state of the interiors"), he is like one who comes out of darkness into light. His weak affections for righteousness and truth give place to strong and joyous ones. He is filled with peace. He is like Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress," after the heavy load which he had carried so long falls off and disappears forever.

There is a third state, which follows with those who are to enter heaven, which Swedenborg terms "a state of instruction." It is an instruction in the laws of heaven. But not merely written on the outer memory, but written in the heart and life.

If the church on earth were what it should be and some time will be, this work, both of judgment and of instruction, would, in great measure, be finished here. But the present disorder renders the judgment especially necessary, and is the cause of its sometimes severe discipline. Let us recall the advice which has come down from early Christian days: "Wherefore judge ye yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord." But, of course, the old idea of being

personally judged by the Lord from a throne is merely a symbolic picture. As He Himself said: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day." When the books of life we have written are opened, another book, the Book of Life, will also be opened, and the light from the latter Book, the Divine Word, will reveal the real quality of our lives.

Beyond the thought of the intermediate world we will not go now, except by brief allusions. A word about heaven. It is the home of those who have exchanged their native selfishness for the Divine unselfishness. Heaven is love to the Lord and the neighbor. Heaven is usefulness, not idleness. Heaven is wisdom increasing forever. Heaven is happiness in loving service to fellow men. Heaven is full of beauty—beauty of scenery, beauty of architecture unknown on earth, beauty of form and feature, beauty of art, of musical expression—but all these outward things are only symbols, understood by all, of interior and sublime thoughts and affections and good will to men.

Heaven is various. It has grand and smaller divisions. "In my Father's house are many mansions." Each finds his place and loving spiritual use. Heaven is the perfect home.

About the evil, I would gladly remain silent. There is a disposition to-day to question the permanency, if not the very existence, of hell. It is quite true that there is no hell according to

the old conception. There is no place of punishment desired or created by the Lord, who is Love Itself. There is no such thing as being *cast* out into an evil and suffering condition against one's will. But there is such a reality as a real, human choice of evil. There is such a thing as a determination to be one's own master. There is a selfishness which one is unwilling to give up. And this is hell, here and hereafter. "He that is unjust, *let him be* unjust still; he that is filthy, *let him be* filthy still." Let him be; the Lord permits it, not desires it.

Knowing, as we do, that the life of the universe is God's life; knowing that His life is love, and unchanging love, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed it; knowing that His mercy is forever; we can safely trust Him for the final result, when once we have chosen to follow Him. He loves us all; He will make the best of all. If there is any way by which the evil can be made willing to give up their evils, He will find it. And if we cannot think of evil as destroyed, we can at least think of the evil world as coming into an orderly external condition, altho' at heart ruled by fears of the inevitable punishment which unbridled self-love always brings upon itself, and which, when it passes its set bounds, is, in the world of spirits, immediately detected and checked.

The old idea of hell is gone or is fast going.

It is for us, as individuals, to see that the real hell is cast out while we live here, by obedience to the Divine laws of life—by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God.

THE END

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